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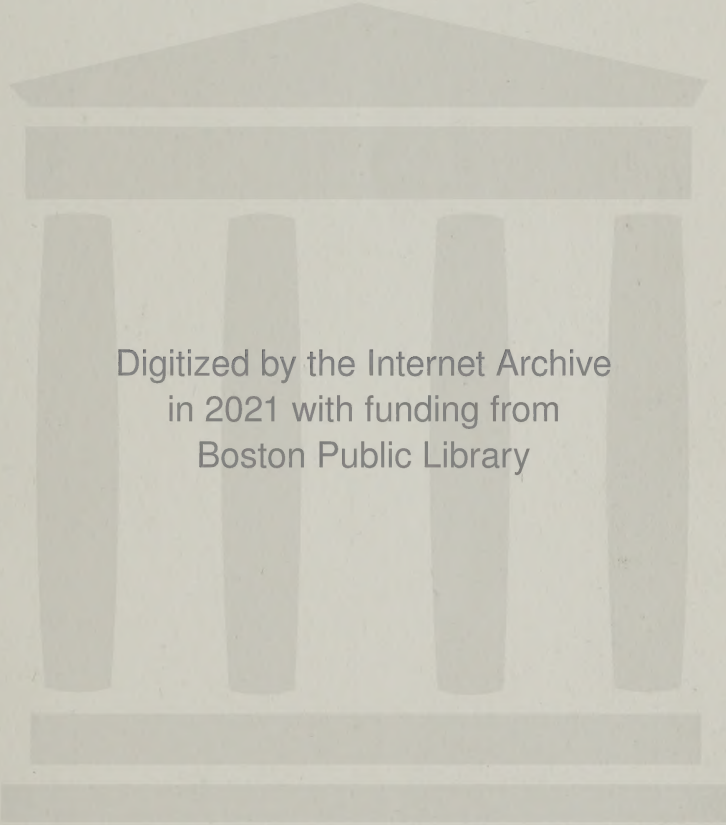
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**C** The Parlement of Foules.  
Written by Geoffrey Chaucer.





**C** Here begynnyth the Parlement of Foulys.

**The Proem.**



He lyf so short, the craft so  
longe to lerne,  
Thassay so sharp, so hard  
the conquerynge,  
The dredful joye, alwey that  
slit so perne;

Al this mene I be love, that myn felynge  
Astonyeth with his wondyrful werkynge  
So sore ywis, that whan I on hym thynke  
Nat wot I wel wher that I flete or synke.

**C** For al be that I knowe nat Love in dede,  
Ne wot how that he quitith folk here hyre,  
Vit happith me ful ofte in bokis reede  
Of hise myraklis and his crewel pre,  
That rede I wel he wele be lord and syre;  
I dar nat seyn, his strokis been so sore,  
But God save swich a lord! I sey na moore.

**C** Of usage, what for lust and what for lore,  
On bokis rede I ofte, as I yow tolde.  
But wherfore that I speke al this? Nat poore  
Agon, it happede me for to be holde  
Up on a bok was wrete with letteris olde,  
And ther upon, a certeyn thing to lerne,  
The longe day ful faste I redde and perne.

**C** For oute of olde feldys, as men sey,  
Comyth al this newe corn from yer to yere;

And out of olde bokis, in good fey,  
 Comyth al this newe science that men lere.  
 But now to purpos as of this matere, -  
 To rede forth so gan me to delite,  
 That al that day me thoughte but a lyte.

**T**his bok, of which I make mencion,  
 Entytlt was al thus as I schal telle,  
 'Tullyus, of the Drem of Scipion.'  
 Chapiteris serene it hadde of hevene and helle  
 And erthe, and soulis that thereynne dwelle,  
 Of whiche, as shortly as I can it trete,  
 Of his centence I wese yow seyn the greeete.

**F**yrst, tellith it, whan Scipion was come  
 In Affrik, how he mette Massynisse  
 That hym for joie in armys hath i/nome.  
 Thanne tellyth he here speche, and of the blysse  
 That was be/twixt hem til the day gan mysse,  
 And how his auncestre, Affryan so deere,  
 Ban in his slep that nyght to hym a/pere.

**T**hanne tellith it, that from a sterre place,  
 How Affryan hath hym Cartage shewid,  
 And warnede hym be/forn of al his grace,  
 And seyde, what man lernyd other lewid  
 That lovede comoun profyt, wel i/therwid,  
 He shulde in/to a blysfyl place wende,  
 There as joye is that last with/outyn ende.

**T**hanne axede he if folk that here been dede  
 Han lyf and dwellynge in a/nothir place.  
 And Affryan seyde, 'Ye, with outyn drede,'

And that oure present worldis syvys space  
 Nys but a maner deth, what weye we trace,  
 And rightful folk schul gon aftyr they deye  
 To hevene; and sche wede hym the Galaxye.

**C** Thanne shewede he hym the lytel erthe that here is,  
 At regard of the hevenys quantite,  
 And after shewede he hym the nyne speris,  
 And aftyr that the melodye herde he  
 That comyth of thilke speris thryes thre,  
 That welles of musik ben and melodye  
 In this world here, and cause of armonye.

**C** Than bad he hym, syn erthe was so lyte,  
 And ful of torment and of harde grace,  
 That he ne schulde hym in the world delyte.  
 Thanne tolde he hym in certeyn yeris space  
 That every sterre schulde come in to his place  
 Ther it was ferst, and al schulde out of mynde  
 That in this world is don of al mankynde.

**C** Thanne preyede hym Scipion to telle hym al  
 The weye to come in to that hevene blis;  
 And he seyde, 'Know thyn self ferst immortal,  
 And loke ay besply thow werche and wysse  
 To comoun profit, and thow shalt not mysse  
 To comyn swiftly to this place deere  
 That ful of blysse is and of soulys cleere.

**C** 'But brekeris of the lawe, soth to seyn,  
 And lykerous folk, aftyr that they ben dede,  
 Schul whirle aboute the erthe alwey in peyne,  
 Tyl manye a world be passid, out of drede,



And that for/gevyn is hir weked dede;  
 Than shal they come in/to that blysfyl place,  
 To whiche to comyn God synden us grace!

**T**he day gan failen, and the derke nyght,  
 That revyth bestis from here besynesse,  
 Berafte me myn bok for lak of lyght,  
 And to my bed I gan me for to dresse,  
 Fulfylde of thought and busy hevynesse;  
 For bothe I hadde thynges that I nolde.  
 And ek I ne hadde thynges that I wolde.

**B**ut fynally, myn spirit at the laste,  
 For/wery of myn labour al the day,  
 Toke reste, that made me to slepe faste;  
 And in myn slepe I mette, as that I lay,  
 How Affrican ryght in the same a/way  
 That Scipion hym say by/fore that tyde  
 Was come and stod right at myn bedis syde.

**T**he wery hunttere, slepyng in his bed,  
 To wode a/gen his mynde goth a/non;  
 The juge dremyth how hise pleis been sped;  
 The cartere dremyth how his carte is gon;  
 The riche of gold; the knyght fyght with his fon;  
 The syke met he drynkyth of the tunne;  
 The loveere met he hath his lady wonne.

**I** can nat seyn if that the cause were  
 For I hadde red of Affrican by/foren,  
 That made me to mete that he stod theree,  
 But thus seyde he: 'Ehow hast the so wel born  
 In lokynge of myn olde bok to torn,



Of whiche Macrobye roughthe nat a lyte,  
That sumdel of thyn labour wolde I quyte.'

*Invocation.*

**O**Vthera, thow blysfyl lady swete,  
That with thyn ferbrond dauntist  
whom thow lest,  
And madist me this swevene for to mete,  
Be thow myn helpe in this, for thow mayst best,  
As wisely as I seye the north north west,  
Whan I be/gan myn swevene for to write;  
So gif me myght to ryme and ek tendyte.

*The Story.*



His forsepyde Affrican me  
hente anon,  
And forth/with hym unto a  
gate me broughte  
Ryght of a park wallid of  
grene ston;

And ovyr the gate with letteris large i/wrowht  
There were verses i/wrete as me thought,  
On eythir syde of ful gret difference,  
Of which I schal now seyn the pleyen sentence.

**T**horgh me men gon in/to that blysfyl place  
Of hertis hele and dedly woundis cure;  
Thorgh me men gon un/to the wellle of grace  
Theere grene and lusty May shal evere endure;  
This is the weye to al good aventure;  
Be glad, thow redere and thyn sorwe out caste.  
Al opyn am I, passe in and sped the faste!

**T**horgh me men gon, than spak that othir side,  
 Unto the mortal strokis of the spere  
 Of whiche disdayn and daunger is the gyde,  
 There nevere tre shal freut ne leys here.  
 This streyn yow ledith to the sorweful were  
 There as the fisch in prysoun is al drepe;  
 Thesche wyng is only the remedye.

**T**hese vers of gold and blak i/wretyn were,  
 Of whiche I gan a/stonyd to be/holde;  
 For/whi? That on encresede ay myn fere,  
 And with that othir gan myn herte bolde.  
 That on me hette, that othir dede me colde;  
 No wit hadde I, for errour, for to chese  
 To entre or fien; or me to save or lese.

**R**ight as be/twixsyn adamauntis two  
 Of evene myght a pece of pryn set,  
 Ne hath no myght to meve too ne fro, -  
 For what that on may hale that othir let,  
 Ferde I, that nyte whethir me was best  
 To entre or leve, til Affreycan, myn gide,  
 We hente, and shof in at the gatis wide.

**A**nd seyde, 'It stante writyn in thyn face  
 Thyn errour, though thou telle it not to me,  
 But dred the not to come in/to this place,  
 For this writyng nys no thyng ment bi the,  
 Ne by non, but he Lovys servaunt be,  
 For thou of love hast lost thyn taste, I gesse,  
 As sek man hath of swete and bytternesse.

**B**ut natheles, al/thow that thou be dul,

Vit that thow canst not do, vit mayest thow se,  
 For manye a man that may nat stonde a pul,  
 It likyth hym at wrastelyng for to be,  
 And demyn vit wher he do bet or he;  
 And, there if thow hast cunnyng for tendite,  
 I shal the shewe mater for to wryte.'

With that myn hand he tok in his anon,  
 Of whiche I confort kaughte, and that as faste;  
 But Lord! so I was glad and wel begoon!  
 For overal where that I myn eyen caste  
 Were treis clad with levis that ay shal laste,  
 Eche in his kynde, of colour froesch and greene  
 As emeroude, that joye it was to seene.

The byldere ok and ek the hardy assch;  
 The pilere elm, the cofere unto carayne;  
 The boxtre pipere; holm to whippis lasch;  
 The saylynge fyr; the cipresse, deth to pleyne;  
 The shetere ew; the asp for shaftys pleyne;  
 The olyve of pes, and ek the dronke vyne;  
 The victor palm, the laurer to devyne.

A gardyn saw I ful of blospemy bowys  
 Op/on a river in a grene mede,  
 There as ther swetnesse everemore i/now is;  
 With flouris white, blewe, and yelwe, and rede,  
 And colde welle/strems no/thing dede,  
 That swemyn ful of smale fischis lite,  
 With fynnyes rede and skalis sylvyr bryghte.

On every bow the bryddis herde I synge,  
 With voys of aungel in here armonye;

Som besyede hem here bryddis forth to brynge.  
 The litle conyes to here pley gunne hys;  
 And ferthere al aboute I gan aspye  
 The dredful ro, the buk and hert and hynde,  
 Squyrelis and bestis smale of gentil kynde.

**O**f instrumentis of strengis in a/cord  
 Herde I so pleye a ravyshyng swetnesse,  
 That God, that makere is of al, and Lord,  
 Ne herde nevere betyr, as I gesse;  
 Therwith a wynd, onethe it myght be lesse,  
 Made in the lervys grene a noyse softe,  
 Acordaunt to the bryddis song a losfe.

**T**he aire of that place so attempre was  
 That nevere was grevaunce of hot ne cold;  
 There wey ek every holsun spice and gras;  
 Ne no man may there waye sek ne old,  
 Vit was there jope more a thousent fold  
 Than man can telle; ne nevere wolde it nyghte,  
 But ay cler day to ony manys syghte.

**O**ndyr a tre be/syde a wellle, I say  
 Cupide oure lord hise arwis forge and file;  
 And at his fet his bowe al redy lay,  
 And wel his doughtyr temperede al this whyle  
 The hevedis in the wellle; and with hire wife  
 She couchede hem aftyr they schulde serve,  
 Some for to sle and some to wounde and kerve.

**T**ho was I war of Plesaunce a/non ryght,  
 And of Aray and Lust and Curteysie,  
 And of the Craft that can and hath the myght



To don be force a wight to don folpe;  
 Disfigurat was she, I nyl nat lye;  
 And by hym/self undyr an ok I gesse,  
 Saw I Delyt that stod with Gentilesse.

**C** I saw Beute, with/outyn ony a/tyr;  
 And Youthe, ful of game and jolyte;  
 Fool/hardynesse and flaterye and Desyr,  
 Messagerye and Meede and other thre, -  
 Here namys shal not here be told for me, -  
 And up/on pileris greete of jasper longe,  
 I saw a temple of bras i/founded stronge.

**C** Aboute that temple daunsedyn alwey  
 Wemen i/nowe, of whiche some ther weere  
 Fayre of hem/self, and some of hem were gay;  
 In kertelis al discheuele wente they there, -  
 That was here offys alwey, yer be peere, -  
 And on the temple of doves white and fayre  
 Saw I syttyng manye an hunderede peyre.

**C** By/fore the temple dore, ful sobyrly,  
 Dame Des sat with a curtyn in hire hond,  
 And by hire syde, wondyr discretly,  
 Dame Pacience syttyng there I fond  
 With face pale, up/on an hil of sond;  
 And aldirnext with/inne and ek with/oute,  
 Byheste and Art, and of here folk a route.

**C** With/inne the temple, of sykys hoot as fyre  
 I herde a swow that gan a/boute renne;  
 Whiche sikis were engenderede with desyr  
 That madyn every auter for to brenne

Of newe flaume; and wel espyed I thenne  
That alle the cause of sorwe that they drye  
Cam of the bittere goddesse Ielousy.

**C** The god Priapus saw I as I wente  
Withinne the temple, in sovereyn place stonde  
In swich aray as whan the asse hym shente,  
With cri be nyghte, and with septure in his honde.  
Ful besyly men gunne asaye and fonde  
Op/ on his hed to sette of sundery hewe  
Barlondis ful of flourrys frosche and newe.

**C** And in a prive corner in desport  
Fond I Venus and hire porter Richesse  
That was ful noble and hautayn of hyre port;  
Derk was that place, but astyrward sightnesse  
I saw a lyte, — unnethe it myghte be lesse, —  
And on a bed of gold sche lay to reste  
Tyl that the hote sunne gan to weste.

**C** Hyre gilte heris with a goldene thred  
I bounden were, untrussede as sche lay,  
And nakyd from the brest up to the hed  
Men myghte hyre sen; and gothly for to say,  
The remenaunt was wel keverede to myn pay,  
Ryght with a subtyl covercheif of Balence,  
Ther nas no thikkere cloth of no defense.

**C** The place gaf a thousand savouris sote,  
And Bacus, god of wyn, sat hire besyde,  
And Sereis next, that doth of hungir boote;  
And as I seyde amyddeis lay Cypride,  
To whom, on kneis two, yonge folk there cryede

### XIII

To ben here helpe; but thus I let hem lye,  
And fethere in the temple I gan espie,

**T**hat, in dispit of Dyane the chaste,  
Ful manye a bowe i/broke hyng on the wal,  
Of maydenys swiche as gunne here tymys waste  
In hyre servyse. I/peyntede were overal  
Ful manye a story of whiche I touche shal  
A fewe, as of Calpyte and Athalante,  
And manye a mayde of which the name I wante:

**S**empramus, Candace and Hercules,  
Biblis, Dido, Thisbe, and Piramus,  
Tristram, Isoude, Paris, and Achilles,  
Elyne, Eliopatre, and Troylus,  
Silla, and ek the modyr of Romulus, -  
Alle these were peyntid on that othir syde,  
And al here love and in what plyt they deyde.

**W**han I was come a/gen un/to the place  
That I of spak, that was so sote and grene,  
Forth welk I tho myn/selvyn to solace.  
Tho was I war wher that ther sat a queene  
That as of lyght the someris sunnys shene  
Passith the sterre, right so overmesure  
She fayrere was than ony creature.

**A**nd in a launde up/on an hil of flouris  
Was set this noble goddesse Nature.  
Of braunchis were here hallis and here bouris  
I/wrought after here cast and here mesuris;  
Ne there was foul that comyth of engendrure,  
That they ne were al prest in here presence,

To take hire dom and geve hire audyence.

**C** For this was on Seynt Volantynys day,  
Whan every bryd comyth there to chese his make,  
Of every kynde that men thynke may;  
And that so heuge a noyse gan they make,  
That erthe and eyr and tre and every lake  
So ful was, that onethe was there space  
For me to stonde, so ful was al the place.

**C** And right as Aleyn, in the Pleynt of Kynde,  
Deryseth Natur in aray and face;  
In swich aray men myghte hire there fynde.  
This nobil emperesse, ful of grace,  
Bad every foul to take his owene place,  
As they were wonyd alwey from yer to yeere  
Seynt Volantynys day to stondyn theere.

**C** That is to seyn, the foulis of ravyne  
Were hepest set, and thanne the foulis smale,  
That etyn as hem nature wolde enclyne,  
As werm or thyng, of which I telle no tale;  
And watyr/foul sat loweste in the dale,  
But foul that lpyrth be sed eat on the grene,  
And that so felse that wondyr was to gene.

**C** There myghte men the ryal egles fynde,  
That with his sharpe lok persith the sunne;  
And others eglis of a lowere kynde,  
Of whiche that clerkis wel devyse cunne;  
Ther was the tiraunt with his federys dunne  
And grey, I mene the gosshawk that doth pyne  
To bryddis for his outrageous ravyne;



- T**he gentyl facoun that with his feet distraynyth  
The kyngis hand; the hardy sperhawk eke,  
The quaylis foo; the merilioun that paynyth  
Hymself ful ofte the larke for to seke;  
There was the douve, with hire even meke;  
The jelous swan, a gens hire deth that syngith;  
The oule ek, that of deth the bode bryngyth;
- T**he crane geaunt, with his trompis soun;  
The thef the chough, and ek the jangelynge ppe;  
The skornynge jay; the elis fo, heroun;  
The false lapwynge, ful of trecherye;  
The starlyng, that the conceyl can be wrepe;  
The tame rodok, and the coward kyte;  
The kok, that orloge is of thorpis lyte;
- T**he sparwe, Venus sone; the nyhtyngale,  
That clepith forth the grene leveys newe;  
The swalwe, morthere of the bees smale,  
That makyn hony of flouris froscche of hewe;  
The wedded turtill, with hire herte trewe;  
The pokok, with his aungelis clothis bryghste;  
The fesaunt, skornere of the cok be nyghste;
- T**he wakyr goos; the cokkow most onkynde;  
The popynjay, ful of delicasye;  
The drake, stroyere of his owene kynde;  
The stork, the wrekere of a vouterpe;  
The hote cormeraunt ful of glotenye;  
The raven wys; the crowe, with vois of care;  
The thurstil old; the frosty feldefare.
- W**hat shulde I seyn? Of foulys every kynde

That in this world hath federis and stature,  
Men myghtyn in that place assemblede fynde  
By fore the noble goddesse Nature;  
And everiche of hem dede his besy cure  
Benygneſy to cheſe or for to take  
By hire a/cord his formel or his make.

**C** But to the poynt, - Nature held on hire hond  
A formeſe egſe, of ſhap the gentilleſte  
That evere ſhe a/mong hire werkis fond;  
The moſte benygne and the goodlieſte;  
In hire was everi vertu at his reſte  
So fer forth, that Nature hire/ſelfe hadde blyſſe  
To loke on hire and ofte hire bek to kyſſe.

**C** Nature, vicarye of the almyghty Lord,  
That hot, cold, hevvy, lyghte, moyſt, and drepe  
Hath knyght, with evene noumberis of a/cord,  
In eſy voys gan for to ſpeke and ſeye,  
'Foulis, take hed of myn centence, I preye,  
And, for yore eſe in fortheryng of youre nede,  
As faſte as I may ſpeke I wele yow ſpeede.

**C** 'Ye knowe wel how Seynt Volantynys day,  
By myn ſtatute and thorgh myn governaunce,  
Ye come for to cheeſe - and fle youre wey -  
Yourre makis, as I prike yow with pleaſaunce;  
But natheles myn ryghtful ordenaunce  
May I nat breke for al this world to wynde,  
That he that moſt is worthi ſhal begynne.

**C** 'The terſlet egſe, as that ye knowe ful wel,  
The foul ryal, a/bovyne every degre,

The wyse and worthi, secre, trewe as stel,  
 Whiche I have formyd as ye may wel se  
 In every part as it best likyth me, –  
 It nedith not his shap yow to devyse, –  
 He shal ferst chese and speken in his gyse.

‘And aftyr hym by ordere shul they chese,  
 Aftyr youre kynde, everich as ye lykth,  
 And as youre hap is shul ye wyne or lese;  
 But which of yow that love most entrikyth  
 God synde hym hire that sorest for him sykth.’  
 And therewithal the tersel gan she calle,  
 And seyde, ‘Myn sone, the choyse is to yow falle.

‘But natheles, in this condicioun  
 Not be the choyse of everich that is heere,  
 That she a/gre to his eleccioun  
 Who/so he be that shulde be hire feere;  
 This is oure usage alwey from yer to yeere,  
 And who/so may at this tyme have his grace,  
 In blissful tyme he cam into this place.’

‘With hed enclyned and with humble cheere  
 This ryal tersel spak, and tariede noght:  
 ‘On to myn sovereyn lady, and not myn fere,  
 I chose and chese, with wil and herte and thought,  
 The formel on youre hond, so wel i/wrought,  
 Whos I am al and evere wese hire serve,  
 Do what hire lest, to do me leve or sterve,

‘Besekynge hire of merci and of grace,  
 As she that is myn lady sovereyne;  
 Or let me depe present in this place;

For certis, longe I may nat lyve in payne,  
 For in myn herte is korvyn every veyne;  
 And havynge only reward to myn trouthe,  
 Myn deere herte have of myn wo sum routhē!

‘And if that I to hyre be found untrewē,  
 Disobeysaunt, or wilful necligent,  
 Avauntour, or in proces love a/newe,  
 I preye to yow this be myn jugement,  
 That with these fouls be I al to/rent,  
 That ilke day that evere she me fynde  
 To hire untrue, or in myn gilt unkynde.

‘And, syn that hire lovyth non so wel as I,  
 Al be it that she me nevere of love be/heette,  
 Thanne ouhte she be myn thurgh hire mercy,  
 For othir bond can I non on hire areete;  
 Ne nevere for no wo ne shal I lette  
 To servyn hire, how fer so that she wende;  
 Say what yow leste, myn tale is at an ende.’

‘Ryght as the froshe, rede rose newe  
 A/gen the somyr sunne coloured is,  
 Ryght so, for shame, al weyen gan the hewe  
 Of this formele, whan she herde al this.  
 She neythir answerde ‘Wel,’ ne seyde a mys,  
 So sore a/basht was she, tyl that Nature  
 Seyde, ‘Doughter, drede nought, I yow assure.’

‘A nothir tersel eggle spak a/non,  
 Of lower kynde, and seyde, ‘That shal nat be!  
 I love hir bet than ye don, be Seynt Ion!  
 Or at the leste I love as wel as ye,



And longere have servyd hire in myn degre;  
And if she shulde a loved for long lovynge,  
To me fullonge hadde be the gerdonynge.

**C** 'I dar ek seyn, if she me fynde fals,  
Unkynde, or jangelere, or rebel ony wyse,  
Or gelous, do me hangyn by the hals;  
And, but I bere me in hire servyse  
As wel as that myn wit can me suffyse,  
From poynt in poynt hyre honour for to save,  
Tak the myn lif and al the good I have.'

**C** The thredde tercel eggle answerde tho,  
'Now, sires, ye seen the lytil leyser heere,  
For every foul cryeth out to ben a/go  
Forth with his mak, or with his lady deere,  
And ek Nature hire/self ne wele not heere,  
For tarynge here, not half that I wolde seye,  
And but I speke I mot for sorwe deye.

**C** 'Of long servyse avante I me nothing  
That possible is to me to deye to/day  
For wo, as he that hath ben languyssynge  
This twenty peer, and as wel happyn may  
A man may servyn bet and more to pay  
In half a yer, althogh it were no moore  
Than sum man doth that hath servyd ful poore

**C** 'I sey not this by me, for I ne can  
Don non servyse that may myn lady plesse;  
But I dar seyn I am hire treweste man,  
As to myn dom, and fayneste wolde hire esse;  
At shorte wordis, - til that deth me sese;

I wele ben heris where I wake or wynke,  
And trewe in al that herte may bethynke.'

**O**f al myn lyf syn that day I was born  
So gentil ple in love or othir thyng  
Ne herde nevere no man me be/forne,  
Who so hadde seyser and cunnyng  
For to reherse hyre cher and hire spekyng:  
And from the morwe gan this speche laste  
Tyl downward drow the sunne wondir faste.

**T**he noyse of foulis for to ben despyvered  
So loude ronge, 'Have don and lat us wende!'  
That wel wende I the wode hadde al to/spyvered.  
'Cum of!' they criedyn, 'allas, ye wele us shende!  
Whan shal youre cursede pletynge havyn an ende?  
How shulde a juge eythir partie leve  
For ye or nay, with/outyn othir preve?'

**T**he goos, the cokkow, and the doke also,  
So cryede, 'Kek, kek!' 'Kokkow!' 'Quek, quek!' on hye,  
That thurgh myne crys the noyse wente tho.  
The goos seyde, 'Al this nys not worth a fye!  
But I can shappe herof a remedie,  
And I wele seye myn verdict fayre and swythe,  
For watyr/soul, who/so be wroth or blythe.'

**A**'And I for werm foul!' quod the fol kokkowe;  
'And I wele of myn owene autorite,  
For comun profit, tak on,—no charg howe,—  
For to despyvere us is gret charite.'  
'Ye may abyde a while pit, perde!'  
Quod the turtill, 'if it be youre wille

A wight may speke, hym were as fayr ben stylle.

- C** I am a sed/foul, on the onworthieste,  
 That wot I wel, and litil of cunnynge,  
 But bet is that a wyhtis tunge reeste,  
 Than entirmetyn hym of suche doinge  
 Of which he neythir rede can, ne fynde;  
 And who/so doth, ful foule hym self a/cloyith,  
 For offys uncommytted ofte a/noyeth.'
- C** Nature, which that alwey hadde an ere  
 To murmur of the lewedenesse, blynde,  
 With facound voyse seyde, 'Hold youre tungis there!  
 And I shal sone, I hope, a conseyl fynde,  
 Vow to delyvere, and from this noyse unbynde  
 I juge on every flok men shul on calle  
 To seyn the verdict for yow foulis alle.'
- C** Assentid were to this conclusioun  
 The briddis alle, and foulis of ravyn  
 Han chosyn fyrst, by playn eleccioun,  
 The terselet of the facoun, to diffyne  
 Al here centence as hem leste to termyne;  
 And to Nature hym gunne to presente,  
 And she acceptyth hym with glad entente.
- C** The terslet seyde then in this manere:  
 'Ful hard were it to prove by resoun  
 Who lovyth best this gentil formeles heere,  
 For everych hath swich replicacioun  
 That non by skillis may been brought a/down,  
 I can not se that argumentis awayle;  
 Thanne semyth it there muste be batayle.'

- C** 'Al redy!' quod thise eglis tercelis tho.  
 'May, sires,' quod he, 'if that I durste it seye  
 Ye don me wrong, myn tale is not i/do,  
 For, sires, ne takith not a/gres, I preye,  
 It may not gon as ye wolde in this wepe;  
 Oure is the voys that han the charg on honde,  
 And to the jugis dom ye motyn stonde;
- C** 'And therfore, pes! I seye; as to myn wit,  
 He wolde thynke how that the worthiest  
 Of knyghthod, and sengest hath used it,  
 Most of estat, of blod the gentilleste,  
 Were sittyngeest for hire, if that her leste,  
 And of these thre she wot hire/self, I trowe,  
 Whiche that he be, for hire is light to knowe.'
- C** The watyr/foulis han here hedis leid  
 To gedere, and of a short avysement,  
 Whan everryche hadde his large gose seyd,  
 They seydyn sothly, al be on assent,  
 How that 'the goos, with hire facounde so gent,  
 That so desprith to pronounce oure nede,  
 Shal telle oure tale,' and preyede God hire spede.
- C** As for these watyr/foulis tho began  
 The goos to speke, and in hire kakelynge  
 She seyde, 'Des! now tak kep every man,  
 And herkenyth which a resoun I shal brynge;  
 Myn wit is sharp, I love no tarpyng;  
 I seye, I rede hym, thow he were myn brothir,  
 But she wese love hym let hym take a/nothir.'
- C** 'Lo, here a perfit resoun of a goos!'



Quod the sperthauke, 'nevere mot she the!

Lo, sich it is to have a tunge loos!

Now perde, fol, now were it bet for the

Han holde thyn pes, than shewe thyn nysete!

It lyth nat in his witte, ne in his wille,

But goth is seyde, a fol can not ben stille.'

**C** The laughtere aros of gentil foulis alle,  
And right anon the sed/foul chosyn hade  
The turtle trewe, and gunne hire to hem calle,  
And prepede hire for to seyn the sothe sadde  
Of this matere, and aysede what she radde.  
And she answerde, that pleyndly hire entente  
She wolde it shewe, and sothly what she mente.

**C** 'May, God forbede, a lovere shulde chaunge!'  
The turtle seyde, and wey for shame red;  
'Thow that his lady evere more be straunge,  
Yit lat hym serve hire til that he be ded.  
Forsothe I preyse nat the gosis red,  
For thow sche deyede I wolde non othir make,  
I wele ben hire til that the deth me take!'

**C** 'Wel bordit,' quod the doke, 'bymyn hat!  
That men shul lovyn alwey, causeles,  
Who can a resoun fynde, or wit in that?  
Daunsith he murpe that is myrtheles?  
What shulde I rekke of hym that is recheles?  
Kek, kek!' yit seith the doke, ful wel and fayre,  
'There been mo steris, God wot, than a payre!'

**C** 'Now fye, cherl! quod the gentil terselet,  
'Out of the donghil cam that word ful right,

Thou canst nat seen what thyng is wel be/set;  
 Thow farst by love as oulys don by syght,  
 The day hem blent, but wel they sen be nyght;  
 Thyn kynde is of so low a wretchednese,  
 That what love is thow canst nat seen ne gese.'

**C** Thow gan the kokkow put hym forth in pres  
 For foul that etith werm, and seyde blythe,  
 'So I,' quod he, 'may have myn make in pes  
 I recche nat how longe that ye stryve;  
 Lat ecche of hem ben soleyн al here lyve;  
 This is myn red, syn they may nat a/corde,  
 This shorte lessoun nedith nat recorde.'

**C** 'Ye, "have the glotoun fild i/now his paunche,  
 Thanne are we wel,"' seyde thanne a merlioun;  
 'Thow morthere of the heysoge on the braunche  
 That broughte the forth! thow reufulles glotoun!  
 Leve thow soleyн, werme corrupcioun!  
 For no fors is of lak of thyn nature!  
 Go, lewed be thow, while that the world may dure!'

**C** 'Now pes,' quod Nature, 'I comaunde here!  
 For I have herd al youre oppynoun,  
 And in effect yit be we nevere the nere;  
 But synally, this is myn conclusioun,—  
 That she hire/self shal han the eleccioun  
 Of whom hire lest, who so be wroth or blythe,  
 Hym that she cheyith, he shal hire han as swithe;

**C** 'For syn it may not here discussid be  
 Who lovyth hire best, as seyth the terselet,  
 Thanne wele I don hire this favour, that she

Shal han right hym on whom hire herte is set,  
And he hire that his herte hath on hire knet;  
Thus juge I, Nature, for I may not lye  
To non estat, I have non othir eye.

‘But as for conseyl for to chese a make,  
If I were Resoun, certis thanne wolde I  
Conseyle yow the ryal tersel take,  
As seyde the tersel et ful skylfully,  
As for the gentilleste and most worthi  
Which I have wrought so wel to myn plesauce  
That to yow oughte to been a suffisaunce.’

‘With dredful vois the formel tho answerde:  
‘Myn rightful lady, goddesse of Nature,  
Soth is that I am evere undyr youre yerde,  
As is everyche lyvis creature,  
And mot ben youre whil that myn lyf may dure;  
And therfore grauntyth me myn ferste bone,  
And myn entent that wele I seyn right sone.’

‘I graunte it yow,’ quod she, and right anon  
This formel eggle spak in this degre:  
‘Almyghty queen, unto this yer be gon  
I aye respit for to advise me,  
And after that to have myn choyse al fre;  
This al and sum that I wele speke and seye;  
Ye gete no more althow ye do me deye.

‘I wele nat serve Venus ne Cupide,  
Forsothe as yit, be no manere weye.’  
‘Now, syn it may non othirwise betyde,’  
Quod tho Nature, ‘heere is no more to seye;

Thanne wolde I that these foulis were a wepe,  
 Eche with his make, for tarynge sengere heere,'-  
 And seyde hem thus, as ye shul aftyr here.

**C** 'To yow speke I, ye tersletis,' quod Nature,  
 'Beth of good herte and servyth, alle thre;  
 A yer nis nat so longe to endure,  
 And eche of yow peignynge in his degre  
 For to do wel, for, God wot, quyt is she  
 For yow this yer, what aftyr so be falle;  
 This entremes is dressid for yow alle.'

**C** And whan this werk al brought was to an ende,  
 To every foul Nature gaf his make  
 By evene acord, and on here wepe they wende;  
 But, Lord, the blisse and joye that they make!  
 For ech gan othir in his wyngis take,  
 And with here nekkis eche gan othyr wynde,  
 Thankynge alwey the noble queen of Kynde.

**C** But fyrst were chosyn foulis for to synge,  
 As, yer be yer, was alwey the usance,  
 To synge a Roundele at here departynge,  
 To don to Nature honour and plesaunce.  
 The note I trow i makid was in Fraunce,  
 The wordis were sweche as ye may here fynde  
 The nexte vers, as I now have in mynde.

**C** Now welcome, somore, with thy sonne softe,  
 That hast thes wintres wedres ovire/shake  
 And drevyne a way the large nyghtes blake:  
 Saynt Volantyne, that ert ful hye o lofte,  
 Thus synngen smale foules for thy sake.



## XXIII

Wefe han they cause forto gladen ofte,  
Sethe ech of hem recoverede hathe hys make;  
Ful blisseful mowe they ben when they awake.

**C** And with the shoutyng whan the song was do  
That the foulis madyn at here flyght a wey,  
I wok, and othere bokys tok me to,  
To reede up/on; and yit I rede alwey,  
In hope i/wis to rede so sum day,  
That I shal mete sum/thyng for to fare  
The bet; and thus to rede I nele nat spare.

**E**xplicit tractatus de congregacione  
Volucrum die Sancti Valentini.

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